

AGENDA
SUISUN MARSH TECHCOMM MEETING

DWR, Environmental Services Office, **Cafeteria Room**
9:30 am, **May 17, 2001**

ADMINISTRATION

1. Agenda Changes, Announcements, and Other Business
2. January 25, 2001 Summary
3. Proposal to integrate TECHCOMM with Suisun Marsh Technical Committee (Curt Schmutte)
4. Next meeting: October 4, 2001 -- All Day Technical Workshop
DWR, Environmental Services Office,
Large Conference Room

DWR REPORT

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| 5. Preliminary Titles for Fall 2001 Technical Workshop | Chris Enright |
| 6. Water Quality Monitoring / SMSCG Operation | Kate Le |
| 7. SMSCG Modification Test | Jim Long |
| 8. SMPA ECAT Update | Terri Gaines |
| 9. Suisun Marsh Charter / Amendment Three Update | Terri Gaines |
| 10. Status of ECAT Black Mallard Restoration | Terri Gaines |
| 11. Morrow Island Fish Screen Project | Cassandra Enos |
| 12. CALFED Suisun Marsh Levee Investigation Team | Chris Enright |
| 13. Suisun Marsh Elevation Survey | Callie Harrison |

DFG REPORT

Laurie Barthman Thompson

14. Island Slough Monitoring
15. Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse Monitoring -- 2000 Activities and Report
16. 1999 Vegetation Survey Report

SRCD REPORT

Chris Enright for Steve Chappell

17. TBA

OTHER BUSINESS

MEETING SUMMARY
SUISUN MARSH TECHCOMM MEETING
January 25, 2001

DWR, Environmental Services Office, Large Conference Room

ATTENDEES

Stephen Berger, RWQCB	Lee Laurence, USBR
Steven Chappell, SRCD	Kate Le, DWR
Gordon Enas, DWR-DOE	Marla Macoubrie, USFWS
Cassandra Enos, DWR	Leslie Pierce, DWR
Chris Enright, DWR	Eliza Sater, DWR
Sarah Estrella, DFG	Talyon Sortor, FSSD
Mike Floyd, DWR	Talyon Sortor, FSSD
Terri Gaines, DWR	Laurie Barthman Thompson, DFG
Callie Harrison, DWR	

ADMINISTRATION

Item 1 - Agenda Changes and Announcements

Mike presented item 5 for Liz Cook. Cassandra presented item 9 after item 5 since she needs to leave early.

Item 2 - April 27, 2000 Meeting Summary

The group agreed that TECHCOMM is an informative meeting, however, the frequency was discussed in detail. After further discussion, the group agreed to conduct 2 regular (i.e. 2 to 3 hrs) meetings and a 1 day long technical meeting per year.

Item 3 - Next TECHCOMM Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 17, 2001 at 9:30 am, DWR Cafeteria Room.

DWR REPORT

Item 4 - Water Quality Monitoring/SMSCG Operation

Mike Floyd (for Liz Cook):

Channel water quality conditions in the Marsh from October 1, 2000 to about mid-January 2001 were discussed. Salinity levels at the five compliance stations; C-2 (Collinsville), S-64 (National Steel), S-49 (Beldon's Landing), S-21 (Sunrise), and S-42 (Volanti); were below State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) standards for October 2000. Salinity levels at the compliance stations appeared to be below standards for the months of November 2000, December 2000, and January 2001, based on a preliminary analysis of available data.

Salinity levels in the Marsh from October 2000 through mid-January 2001 were noted to be somewhat elevated in comparison to the previous water year. The elevated levels were attributed to lower Delta outflow.

A few graphs were presented illustrating the effect of delta outflow and operation of the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates (SMSCGs) on Marsh salinity levels. Significant increases in Delta outflow during late October 2000 and early January 2001, as well as the operation of the SMSCGs were shown to reduce salinities.

Some discussion was given to salinity levels at Monitoring Stations S-35 and S-97. It was speculated that salinity levels at S-35 would have exceeded SWRCB standards for December had S-35 been a compliance station rather than just a monitoring station. After the meeting it was determined that salinity levels at S-35 during December 2000 were just below the SWRCB standard.

Discussion: No discussion.

Item 9 – Morrow Island Fish Screen Project

Cassandra Enos:

A brief overview of the MIDS Fish Screen Project was given. The status of the project so far is summarized as follow:

Distributed Screen Element:

- ◆ DWR received a proposal for the design, construction, and operations and maintenance of the 5 distributed conical screens.
- ◆ DWR reviewed the proposal and provided comments to SRCD.
- ◆ DWR is currently working on internal contracting issues.

MIDS Intake Screens:

- ◆ DWR DOE is working on the plans and specifications for the two conical screens at the MIDS intake, as well as two new culverts.
- ◆ Draft plans should be available for ESO to review this week.

Permitting:

- ◆ Cassandra attended the December Regulatory Group meeting and provided a summary of the project.
- ◆ Debra O'leary from the USACE recommended we request an amended maintenance permit from the Corps, which would include installation of the fish screens.
- ◆ USACE plans to request an amended BO form the USFWS for the project.
- ◆ The USFWS has indicated that DWR will need to consult with the Service under both the ESA and the Environmental Coordination Act.
- ◆ Staff from both sections of USACE have indicated mitigation will likely be required for loss of wetlands habitat.
- ◆ DWR has had informal discussions with NMFS regarding the use of treated lumber pilings in the Marsh. At this time, NMFS is working on developing a policy prohibiting the use of treated lumber.

Next Steps:

- ◆ Prepare contract with SRCD for installation of 5 conicals.
- ◆ Site visits with regulatory agency staff to discuss project impacts
- ◆ CCR surveys are scheduled for February at all sites
- ◆ Completed Project Description and amended BA for submission to USACE and USFWS.

Discussion: No discussion.

Item 6 – SMSCG Modification Test

Leslie Pierce:

The SMSCG Steering Group met on Dec. 11 to discuss draft results from the Technical Team analyses of data from the 1993-1994 & 1998-1999 salmon studies.

The results from the 1998 and 1999 studies indicate that the modified flashboards are not improving passage at the SMSCG. The Tech Team also analyzed 10 environmental factors that may have influenced salmon passage at the gates. The environmental factors were not a significant influence on salmon passage. The Tech Team proposed 9 alternatives for how to proceed. The SMSCG Steering Group narrowed it down to 4 options:

- 1) removing the top flashboard,
- 2) having a 6 foot submerged slot,

- 3) leaving the boat lock open except for when boats need to pass, and
- 4) installing a fish ladder.

On January 29 the SMSCG Steering Group will meet again to discuss the feasibility and cost of each option, and to discuss the regulatory agencies recommendations/preferences. Copies of the final Tech Team analyses report will be available at the January 29th meeting.

Discussion: No comments.

Item 7 – SMPA ECAT Update

Terri Gaines:

The Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement ECAT continues to meet monthly. Meeting participants included staff from the California Department of Fish and Game Bay-Delta and Region 3, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Suisun Resource Conservation District as well as DWR staff. With the interagency and management focus on the Suisun Marsh Charter, the ECAT can focus on monitoring and compliance activities in Suisun Marsh including SMHM surveys, the marshwide vegetation survey, and developing and approving a Suisun Marsh Clapper rail survey.

The ECAT proposal submitted to CALFED for property acquisition and tidal restoration in Suisun Marsh was included in the projects approved by CALFED in December, although we have not been contacted with official notification of approval. ECAT has developed a criteria to evaluate properties offered by willing sellers. The implementation team will begin work once the CALFED contract is in place.

Other topics discussed at ECAT include the Morrow Island Distribution System Fish Screen Alternatives, DFG's Hill Slough West Habitat Restoration Project.

Discussion: No discussions.

Item 8 – Suisun Marsh Charter / Amendment Three Update

Terri Gaines:

Amendment Three

Amendment Three is on hold because the agencies are now focusing on the Suisun Marsh Charter. It is likely that many Amendment Three actions will be included in the implementation plan for the Marsh.

Suisun Marsh Charter

The CALFED executive committee requested that a team be put together develop a charter among the Calfed agencies to deal with Suisun Marsh issues and develop a regional ecosystem restoration implementation plan for Suisun Marsh. USFWS and DFG Region 3 are taking the lead on developing the Charter. The Charter development team consists of management level group from DFG, USFWS, USBR, DWR, and SRCDD. Staff from these agencies are assisting as well.

Discussion: No comments.

Item 10 - CALFED Suisun Marsh Levee Investigation Team

Chris Enright:

No summary submitted.

Item 11 – Suisun Marsh Elevation Survey

Callie Harrison:

Background:

Based on findings of Suisun Marsh Levee Investigation Team, Marsh levees have been included in the CALFED Framework. The CALFED goals of tidal marsh restoration and levee maintenance in the Marsh require baseline elevation data for the Marsh. Currently have little (no useful) topographic data for the Marsh.

Purpose:

Obtain topographic data appropriate for

- Restoration Assessment
- Levee Profiles
- Modeling
- Vegetation Survey
- Landowners / Managed Wetlands

Elevation Team:

First meeting November 15 to assess users needs. 1-foot contours deemed appropriate. Met with Robert Yoha (DOC) and Jim Reis in December to discuss GeoSAR applicability.

Status:

- DOE developing cost estimates for photogrammetry (at differing resolutions), including additional benchmarks. (CALFED funded)
- Potential to become demo project for GeoSAR technology through CalGIS. Radar technology still under development. Jim Reis currently developing work plan proposal for evaluation by team. (free with in-kind)

Next:

Iron out immediate benchmark needs for Marsh.

Discussion: No comments.

Talyon Sortor: FFSWD search for new discharge outfall.

The Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District (FSSD) is investigating routes and discharge points for a new outfall from its wastewater treatment plant. FSSD currently has one outfall discharging into Boynton Slough. FSSD is studying the feasibility of an additional outfall to provide reliability of discharge, increased capacity for the future and the potential of using a new outfall to enhance Suisun Marsh water quality. Any questions about the project can be directed to Talyon Sortor at (707)-429-8930 or tsortor@fssd.com.

Discussion: No discussions.

DFG REPORT

Item 12 – Island Slough Monitoring Report

Sarah Estrella:

The 1999 Island Slough Wetland Development management and monitoring update was completed and sent to the appropriate agencies. DFG staff begun to work on the 2000 report and some of the recommendations for 2000 (from the 1999 report) were completed. The 111-acre pond 7, which is a salt marsh harvest mouse pond, was not responding as quickly as hoped to habitat management. The vegetation was below minimum standards set by DFG and habitat objectives may not be met

by 2002. As of January, only DFG had begun to evaluate the situation and the following were remedial measures discussed in the very early stages of research:

change flooding and draining cycle
evaluate soil salinity
speak with experts and other agencies
apply pickleweed seed, plant pickleweed plugs, or remove weeds

Discussion: No comments.

Item 13 – Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse Monitoring

Laurie Barthman Thompson:

The report was released and covered the permitting process of the mouse trapping with some background, methodology, and results of the trapping relative to vegetations.

Item 15 – 1999 Vegetation Survey Report

Laurie Barthman Thompson:

No summary submitted.

SRCD REPORT

Item 16 – SRCD Perspective on Suisun Marsh Charter

Steve Chappell:

No summary submitted.

Item 17 – Suisun Marsh Regulatory Group Update

Steve Chappell:

No summary submitted.

Item 18 – Waterfowl Feeding Ecology Study

Steve Chappell:

No summary submitted.